



## Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council

A Council of the Business Industry Foundation of Middlesex County  
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### TESTIMONY OF Betsey Chadwick, Director, MCSAAC

#### CONCERNING

#### HB 5030- AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015.

**Appropriations Health & Hospitals Subcommittee Hearing, February 18, 2014**

My name is Betsey Chadwick and I am the Director of Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council. On behalf of MCSAAC and my twelve fellow RAC directors across the state, I want to offer testimony concerning the budget and the need for additional funding for regional action councils. Collectively, we provide every community in Connecticut with education, training and advocacy for substance abuse prevention.

The RACs receive about \$300,000 or \$22-28k per RAC to implement the federal Partnership for Success (PFS) grant. On June 30, 2014, the PFS grant is set to expire, severely hampering the ability of RACs to provide data-based, outcome-driven prevention services, which is an integral part of the RAC function. The PFS grant is awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and administered by the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

#### ***Potential Impact of Lost Funding:***

##### **Staffing**

- Reduced hours for staff; elimination of clerical staff responsible for data collection
- Reduced resources to support the maintenance of key community relationships critical to:
  - ensuring comprehensive data collection
  - engagement of key community members in the data analysis
  - implementation of evidence-based prevention strategies

### **Data Collection and Evaluation**

- Reduced capacity for collection and analysis of student survey and youth drug use data, critical to informing and evaluating prevention activities
  - Fewer surveys and focus groups of youth and adult community members
  - Reduced staffing resources to provide technical assistance to Local Prevention Councils for local data analysis and development of effective data presentations used to drive community change through evidence-based, outcome-driven prevention planning
  - Reduced resources to support creation of regional epidemiologic profiles required by DMHAS to provide planning data to state and local communities

### **Programming**

- Elimination of local public awareness efforts such as PSAs, billboards, mass transit signage, etc. on underage drinking, alcohol abuse, and marijuana abuse
- Reduction of training programs offered by RACs to local communities
  - Mental Health First Aid /Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
  - Professional development for teachers, and youth-serving professionals
- Reduction of regional forums that bring together law enforcement, medical professionals, and youth leaders to discuss drug abuse trends and effective responses

### ***Solution:***

Through its professional statewide association, the Connecticut Prevention Network, **MCSAAC requests an additional \$300,000 from the Pre-Trial Account be included in the FY 2015 budget (See P.A. 13-184, Sec. 30).** Note that this funding does not come from the General Fund. The Pre-Trial Account provides core funding for the RACs; we ask that it expand slightly to take the place of lost federal dollars that have made the RAC system an essential part of substance abuse prevention work in 169 communities across the state.